

Current Conditions: Presence or Absence of Wilderness Characteristics

Area Unique Identifier: CO-060-003

Acreage: 5,766.5

Is the area of sufficient size?

Yes ☒ No ☐

Description

The unit of BLM land identified as CO-060-003 is adjacent to the Red Cloud Peak Wilderness Study Area (WSA). The northern boundary follows road 3303. The eastern boundary is private land and the Red Cloud Peak WSA. The southern boundary is road 3303. The western boundary is private land, the Hinsdale County line and the San Juan County line.

(1) Does the area appear to be natural?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Description

This area consists of a vast topography with extreme changes in elevation. Within this parcel Gravel Mountain rises in the center with Edith Mountain in the southern portion, and Wood Mountain on the western boundary. There are also many water features within this unit. Schafer Gulch, Palmetto Gulch, and Red Cloud Gulch all flow in the northwest portion of the parcel. Henson Creek runs along the area's northern boundary. Vegetation within this parcel includes pine, aspen, willow and cottonwood in riparian areas, various grasses, and numerous wildflowers including columbines. In the higher elevations there are areas with little or no vegetation. Three potential fens are included in this parcel at a combined total of 18.5 acres with ratings of low, medium and high. The end of road 3304 is completely dominated by rock and gravel due to the lands natural landscape and mining activity. Some of the high peaks of this area consist of rock formations or slopes covered in loose rocks. Other high elevation areas that do have vegetation only possess various grasses. The parcel does possess some evidence of past mining; including an historic mining site at the end of road 3304 (Golconda Mining Complex) that is maintained and preserved by the BLM. Present human use of the area is dominated by recreational activities that focus on the lands natural and historic values. A few closed roads do exist within the center and southern portions of the parcel; these all lead to private land/mining claims. Due to lack of use and the establishment of closed road barriers these routes have been almost entirely reclaimed by the vegetation. A previous evaluation of this area was performed by the Montrose BLM Office in 1979 but it was dismissed from the Red Cloud Peak WSA due to public comments and the decision to keep the previous boundary lines.

(2) Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for solitude?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Description

This parcel's extreme topography and changes in elevation along with its areas of dense tree vegetation and riparian vegetation lining Henson Creek create outstanding opportunities for solitude. Due to these circumstances many individuals could be within this area and not be aware of one another.

Does the area (or the remainder of the area if a portion has been excluded due to unnaturalness and the remainder is of sufficient size) have outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Description

This unit possesses outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation such as hiking, backpacking and wildlife viewing. The topography and range in vegetation provides a variety of landscapes that can be explored.

(3) Does the area have supplemental values (ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historic value)?

Yes ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐

Description

Within this area there are several areas of scenic value including numerous mountains, water falls, creeks and gulches. Scenic views that can be seen from this unit include land formations in and around the parcel. There are also historic mining areas and cabin remnants. The Golconda Mining Complex is maintained and monitored by the BLM (end of road 3304) and estimated to bring $\pm 2,000$ visitors annually to the historic mine site. Three potential fens exist in this parcel providing ecological value, the first potential fen is 2.58 acres and rated low, the second is 6.53 acres and rated medium, the third is 9.55 and rated high.

Summary of Analysis

Area Unique Identifier: CO-060-003

Result of Analysis:

1. Does the area meet any of the size requirements? ☒ Yes ☐ No
2. Does the area appear to be natural? ☒ Yes ☐ No
3. Does the area offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive or unconfined type of recreation? ☒ Yes ☐ No
4. Does the area have supplemental values? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Check one

☒ The area, or portion of the area, has wilderness characteristics and is identified as lands with wilderness characteristics.

☐ The area does not have wilderness characteristics.

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Date: 7/24/13

*This form documents information that constitutes an inventory finding on wilderness characteristics. It does not represent a formal land use allocation or a final agency decision subject to administrative remedies under either 43 CFR parts 4 or 1610.5-3.